(c) No starvation deaths have been reported by any State Government.

Rotting wheat In FCI godowns

490. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that stink of rotting wheat is emanating from the FCI godowns in certain places like Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to ensure that rotten foodgrains are not supplied for Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Wheat stocks in storage in Cover and Plinth (CAP) complex of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) at Zangalapally, Anantpur (AP) were affected due to unprecedented heavy rain. The affected wheat stocks were salvaged and a quantity of 32.2 MTs has been segregated as damaged. Besides, wheat stocks in storage in CAP complexes in East and West Godavari, Krishna, Nalgonda, Karimnagar, Nellore, Warangal and Mehaboobnagar districts were also affected and 414 MTs of wheat has been segregated as damaged.

(c) Only sound stocks, fit for human consumption, are issued for distribution under PDS. The stocks are also jointly inspected by the FCI and State Government officials before lifting from the FCI depot for issue under PDS.

Expansion of Public Distribution System

491. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to avoid the starvation deaths; by expanding the PDS;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of starvation deaths reported because of the delay in identifying BPL card holders; and

(d) what are the steps taken by Government to ensure foodgrains for the poor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (c) No starvation deaths have been reported by any State Government.

(d) The Government have taken a number of steps to ensure availability of foodgrains for the poor which have been mentioned in the Statement. [*Refer to the Statement appended to the answer to Unstarred Question No. 488]*

Offtake of PDS Foodgrains

492. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to increase the offtake of PDS foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any proposal is pending before Government to decrease issue prices of PDS foodgrains; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has taken following steps to increase the offtake of foodgrins under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS):—

(i) The allocation of foodgrains for families Below Poverty Line (BPL) was increased w.e.f. 1.12.2000 by shifting the basis of estimation of number of BPL families to the population projections of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000 instead of the earlier population projection of 1995.

(ii) The allocation of foodgrains to BPL families has been further increased from 20 kg to 25 kg per family per month at BPL rates from July, 2001.

(iii) The Central Issue Prices (CIPs) of wheat and rice for families Above Poverty Line (APL) have been reduced from Rs.830 to Rs. 610 per quintal and from Rs.1130 to Rs. 830 per quintal respectively *w.e.f.* 12.7.2001.

(iv) The Government has launched Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) for the poorest of the poor to enhance food security for all and to create a hunger free India. Under this scheme about one crore families out of the number of BPL families, would be provided foodgrains at the rate of 25 kg. per family